

## **REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application as amended.

Claims 1-3, 5, 7-8, and 10-21 have been amended. Applicants respectfully request that the proposed amendments to the claims be accepted. No claims have been cancelled. No new claims have been added. Therefore, claims 1-21 are now presented for examination.

### **35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection**

#### **Epinions.com Preview in view of Scharber et al.**

Claims 1-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Epinions.com Preview, 1999 Epinions, Inc. (“Epinions.com”) in view of Scharber et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,374,290 (“Scharber”).

Epinions.com discloses allowing consumers “to write about products [they] love or hate . . . [and they] get to *rate the usefulness of anyone’s opinion*” (page 2; emphasis provided). Epinions.com further discloses “[b]uilding [a] Web of Trust” by “*rat[ing] reviews*” (page 5; emphasis provided). Epinions.com discloses *rating opinions and articles* and building a Web of Trust, which is not the same as rating a particular user within a community as recited by claim 1.

Scharber discloses assigning “a first *group rating* . . . to the first *virtual community* . . . [and] to a first *set of article groups*” (Abstract; emphasis provided). Scharber further discloses “allow[ing] the establishment of *virtual communities*” so that the “[c]lients can be grouped into self selected *virtual communities*” (col. 3, lines 36-38; emphasis provided). Clients of a particular virtual community are then allowed to “*rate*

*or filter discussion groups*" and "set their own *group filtering and rating* preferences" (col. 3, lines 14-16 and 40-41; emphasis provided). Stated differently, Scharber discloses *creating and rating communities and groups*, and does not teach or suggest deriving a community rating for a particular user as recited by claim 1. Hence, Schraber adds nothing relevant to Epinions.com with regard to claim 1.

In contrast, claim 1, as amended, in pertinent part, recites, "maintaining a characteristic value for each user of the plurality of users . . . and deriving a community rating for the particular user by performing a function on the characteristic values of the users of the plurality of users related to the particular user (emphasis provided). Neither Epinions.com nor Scharber, individually or when combined, teach or reasonably suggests deriving a community rating for a particular user as recited by claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claim 1 and its dependent claims be withdrawn.

With regard to independent claims 13, 14, and 19, they contain limitations similar to those of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claim 13, 14, and 19 and their dependent claims be withdrawn.

### **Conclusion**

Applicants respectfully submit that claims as amended are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn and the application be allowed.

### **Invitation for a Telephone Interview**

The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at (303) 740-1980 if there remains any issue with allowance of the case.

### **Request for an Extension of Time**

The Applicants respectfully petition for an extension of time to respond to the outstanding Office Action pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) should one be necessary. Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 to cover the necessary fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(a) for such an extension.

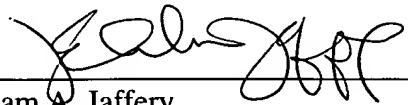
### **Charge our Deposit Account**

Please charge any shortage to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

Date: June 23, 2003

  
Aslam A. Jaffery  
Reg. No. 51,841

12400 Wilshire Boulevard  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90025-1030  
(303) 740-1980